

Members

Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson
Sen. Phil Boots
Sen. Richard Young
Sen. James Lewis
Rep. Robert Bischoff, Vice-Chairperson
Rep. Kreg Battles
Rep. William Ruppel
Rep. Phyllis Pond



STATE FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 15-1-1.5-4

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 9, 2008
Meeting Time: 9:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: Board Room of the Administration
Building Indiana State
Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th Street
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 2

Members Present: Sen. James Merritt, Chairperson; Sen. Phil Boots; Sen. Richard Young; Sen. James Lewis; Rep. Robert Bischoff, Vice-Chairperson; Rep. William Ruppel.

Members Absent: Rep. Kreg Battles; Rep. Phyllis Pond.

Chairperson Merritt called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

1. Cindy Hoye, Executive Director, Indiana State Fair

Although she is without final numbers, Director Hoye believes that the 2008 Fair was perhaps the most financially healthy fair. Over the last few years, any profits from the Fair went into capital. Those monies will help to renovate Discovery Hall in the 4-H complex. Several recent exhibition shows were off about 40% in attendance from prior years; Director Hoye believes this to be a result of the economy.

October 8 was just a typical day at the fairgrounds, she said in jest. There was a Senior Expo in one building, over 500 schoolchildren attending "The State's Largest Classroom", a presidential candidate rally for Senator Obama at the Grandstand, and an Indiana

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Pacers pre-season game in the evening at the Pepsi Coliseum where the Pacers have not played since the 1970s. Seeing what her employee team can do when pressed was phenomenal, Director Hoyer said. In response to a question from Senator Boots, she stated that the Fair receives \$3,000 rent per event for the Pepsi Coliseum and then a portion of the proceeds from tickets, food and beverage, and parking. The Grandstand rent is \$6,000 a day and the presidential rally included a set-up day. Fairgrounds policy is to receive all rental fees up front. Representative Bischoff commended the administration and staff as he had heard good words from constituents, and Director Hoyer stated that she would pass the compliments along. Praise also came from Senator Young, Representative Ruppel, and Chairperson Merritt.

Discussion ensued about assistance that the Fair receives from the Department of Correction when offenders help with set-up and cleaning. They are under guard and work all night long during the Fair.

Further discussion continued concerning the funding of the Fair. Representative Bischoff commented that the funding received from revenue from the riverboats certainly helps the Fair and Fairgrounds. Director Hoyer reminded the Committee that the 2008 Session made the Fair subject to appropriations from the General Fund; \$1,300,000 was appropriated until the next biennium. Representative Ruppel cautioned that the Committee must make sure that monies to the Fair are not cut during the budget proceedings in the 2009 Session. He believes that many of the public who attended the Fair in 2008 could not afford to go anywhere else, and that it is important that their Indiana entertainment dollars stay in Indiana.

Chairperson Merritt asked about the state of the entertainment acts for the 2009 Fair and Director Hoyer answered that there were fair staffers in Nashville, Tennessee, at that moment negotiating for acts. The price of well-known acts has escalated in recent years. The decision to book entertainment is challenging in that no one knows how much money people will have to spend next summer. Tractor pulls will be brought back to the Fair next year after a long absence. Staff is also considering one night in the Grandstand featuring entertainment solely from Indiana.

2. Justin Armstrong, Barn Director, Center for Agricultural Science and Heritage (The Barn)

Director Armstrong furnished the Committee with "Inside the Grounds" (Exhibit A). "The State's Largest Classroom" is deep into the season with visits from school children. The Barn hosted 5,000 visitors for the 2007-2008 school year and have had 3,500 youth visit already in the first 5 weeks of this fall. Both inner-city and suburban children benefit from visits to The Barn. Staff at The Barn hope to introduce 10 new programs in 2009. Distance learning programs are coming on-line. The Barn's goal is to double its visitor capacity next year and staff always strives to provide better programming.

3. Resolution for the 2009 Session Concerning the Beginning and Ending Dates for Certain Schools

Attorney for the Committee Susan Montgomery passed out copies of a proposed resolution to the Committee (Exhibit B). After discussion, a motion was made by Senator Lewis and seconded by Representative Ruppel to approve the resolution for introduction in the 2009 Session. The motion passed by voice vote.

There being no more business before the Committee, Chairperson Merritt adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.